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admit that at times I have lost sight of the fact that not everyone finds the formula as interesting as I do, but, very simply, it is of interest because it involves a lot of money. If we are not careful and thorough, many of the state's schools and students are not adequately or fairly funded and/or we don't have money to meet the other critical needs the state faces, but I've tried to get a good grasp on the other educational issues as well. It is particularly important, I think, to understand policy precedence on those issues. Ideally, we choose our policy directions very carefully and then persist. If we decide to change directions, we need to be aware and we need to make those we represent aware that that is what we are doing. My district includes part of a large urban system--Lincoln, a Class III K-12 system--Waverly, and a Class I district in Cheney. There are both urban and rural residents. I'm, therefore, able to get several perspectives right in my own district. But I found it very useful as well to travel to other parts of the state to listen to views of school administrators and others. Many of you, my colleagues, have also been very important to the development of my policy philosophy because you have related good ideas and sound thinking, and in a few instances because you haven't; I'm hopeful that this grounding will enable me to work well with the many different issues and interest groups. The people we represent have a history of great support for public education. They remain committed to the goal of providing high quality educational opportunity for each young person in our state. Our task in this Legislature is to do our part to carry on the Nebraska educational tradition. Among the issues we must address are teacher salaries, policies dealing with declining enrollment in school systems, variability and equity in the distribution of state aid, and building and maintaining excellence in our higher education system. I'm anxious to go to work. To do that I need your vote, then I will need your ideas and energy. Thank you.

PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Thank you, Senator Raikes. Senator Thompson.

SENATOR THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the body. I place my name in nomination to be Chair of the Education Committee of the Legislature. As you may have noticed